

My Wife

is outside calling the cat. She is barefoot and the wind under her dress holds it high on her thighs.

Grief has softened her pleas to a single cry. I hear her advance and retreat on the dark boulevard. She has one hand to her lips, echo-style.

Now the neighbors will think that she is near mad from malignancy or that our life together is empty as a cave.

The truth is that she admires the cat who eats here. He has balls like ornaments and is fierce in his affections.

A One-Armed Man

and his wife came into the doctor's office together and sat down on a small bench.

Pretty soon the receptionist brought some forms to fill out and he moved to a chair a few yards away.

"How old is he?" asked the nurse.
"Does he have insurance?"

His wife took the papers back and filled in some more blanks.

"How old are you, anyway?" she asked.

He held up five fingers and then two.

Ozymandias And Harriet

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings,
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and"
"Ozzie, the Thornberrys want us to make
four for bridge so stop standing around
in that pile of sand you call a back yard."
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings,

Look on my works"

"Ozzie, David and Ricky just called from the malt shop. Do you really owe \$11.00 for banana splits? No wonder you're such a colossal wreck."

"My name is Ozymandias, king of"

"Ozzie, now the grass is dying in front, too. What will the neighbors say? Can't you do something? It's not like you held down a regular job, you just sit around the house in your cardigan."

"My name is Oz...."

"Ozzie, don't frown and wrinkle your lip that way. It looks like you've got gas."

Boundless and bare the level lawn stretches far away.

Folding The Panties

The washwater blond said that no self-respecting man would do his own laundry much less a woman's.

I rehearsed some face saving lines:

My wife is ill.

My old lady's sick.

My tramp is on the skids.

She interrupted, my excuses hung there edgewise:

Your woman's not home, neither, she said.
Out with a real man, that's where she is
and you with every panty she owns right
there in your basket.

I smiled politely, strolled outside, sprinted for a phone.

She was there alright, the crafty bitch. But I smelled the whiskey on her breath, heard the bed slosh and then more pairs of boots hit the floor than I cared to count.

On The Horn

You know the kind of day: till 3:00 a.m. with The Hooch and then up at 7:00 with The Fear. Even Miller's doesn't seem to be working this morning and I hate like hell to start the day with a Ramos Fizz